

## **Discussion of the Development of a Cost Recovery Plan for Some Accreditation Activities February 2013**

### **Introduction**

This agenda item continues the discussion of possible options for the development of a cost recovery plan for some aspects of the Commission's accreditation process for educator preparation programs.

### **Staff Recommendation**

This is an information item.

### **Background**

Currently, all of the Commission's activities are funded through two main funds: the teacher credentials fund and the test development fund. The latter is primarily intended to support all the functions necessary for a viable examination system for educator preparation. The former supports all other activities of the Commission including discipline, credentialing, and standards development and accreditation. The teacher credentialing fund is highly subject to the peaks and valleys of the number of teachers being prepared and the number of teachers renewing credentials. As a result of the existing job market in California, the teacher credentialing fund experienced a significant decrease in revenue. As a result of the declining revenue, the Commission made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend most accreditation activities in the spring of 2012 in order to remain solvent. While the teacher credential fee was increased from \$55 to \$70, there has been continuing discussion about whether the Commission should be seeking additional resources to support the work of the Commission. Among these possible proposals is the option of charging institutions seeking accreditation for some aspects of accreditation.

The Governor's Budget proposal introduced on January 10, 2013 proposes an increase of \$200,000 to support the review of educator preparation documents, revenue that would result from the adoption of a fee recovery system. At this time there is little additional information on what exactly the Governor is proposing, however, it is expected that some of the details will be included in budget trailer bills which have yet to be introduced as of the writing of this item.

### **Fees for Accreditation Activities**

At the October 2012 COA meeting, the COA discussed, in one of the small group discussions, the topic of the Commission charging fees for accreditation activities. Appendix A contains an analysis of costs for various accreditation activities compiled by staff and presented at the COA meeting in October 2012. A number of concerns were raised during that discussion by COA members. Chief among these concerns was that of simply shifting the funding of accreditation from one public agency, in a large measure, to other public agencies (public universities, districts, and county offices of education). The COA members seemed to be in agreement that the preference would be for the Commission to continue to fund routine accreditation activities through credential fees and that the fee level should be set at a level that fully funds

accreditation, but there also appeared to be some possible support around the idea that perhaps the cost for some accreditation activities could be borne by the institution. These included new program proposals and those institutions that required revisits or in cases where extraordinary effort was necessary on the part of the Commission (institutions that required extensive follow up or review).

### **Next Steps**

Because this topical area has been included in the Governor's budget for 2013-14 and there is an expectation that additional details will be available in subsequent budget trailer bills, action by the COA or the Commission on this topic is premature. As a result, the staff brings this item to the COA for information only, with additional information being provided as more details become available. If budget trailer bill language on this topic is passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, the Commission should be ready as soon as possible in 2013-14 to adopt and implement the cost recovery plan that is consistent with the language contained in those bills. Because the COA meets only one more time in the current fiscal year (June 2013), it is unclear whether or how the COA can have an opportunity to weigh in on any proposed plan.

## Appendix A Analysis of Accreditation Costs

**Initial Program Review/Initial Institutional Review:** When the Commission adopts new standards or through legislation, regulation or policy that creates new pathways to particular types of credentials, institutions (including colleges, universities, local education agencies or other types of entities) have the opportunity to submit proposals for new programs. Each proposal is reviewed by two expert educators from the field—faculty and/or practicing educators. At this time, the travel for the two individuals to review the proposal is estimated at **\$1,600 per document** review.

**Program Assessment:** Annually, about 275 distinct educator preparation programs begin Program Assessment. Each program assessment submission is reviewed by 2 educators from the field—faculty and practicing educators. During a 2-day reading session, a pair of reviewers can usually read two proposals. As a result, Program Assessment costs approximately **\$220,000 annually**. The Commission does not pay the reviewers for this work, only the costs of travel and per diem.

**Site Visits:** Costs have ranged from \$2,500- \$12,000 per institution. A working average estimate of site visit cost is \$6,000. Thus, the Accreditation Site Visit process costs approximately **\$250,000 annually**.

**Extraordinary Activities:** When an institution has not met the Commission's standards, follow-up from staff, quarterly reporting or a re-visit may be required the year after the accreditation site visit. Depending on the seriousness of the issues requiring follow up, the following actions may be required of the institution:

- *Address Stipulations*—Institutions who fail to meet the Commission's standards must demonstrate that they have remedied the problem, usually within one year of the site visit. Review of the institution's progress may necessitate a staff visit to the institution to provide technical assistance, staff time to review documentation, or time for the original Team Lead to review documentation that has been submitted. **Estimate \$500 per institution**
- *Quarterly Reports*—If the stipulations are significant and the COA has concerns that the institution may not make adequate progress throughout the year, the COA may stipulate that quarterly reports are due from the institution. Staff must review the documentation, may necessitate a staff visit to the institution to provide technical assistance, and time for the team lead to review the documentation that has been submitted. **Estimate \$1,000 per institution**
- *Accreditation Re-visit*—when a re-visit is scheduled, typically the staff consultant and team lead return to the institution for a 2 day re-visit. At times additional team members are required because of the specific nature of the standards that were not fully met at the time of the initial site visit. **Estimate \$1,000 per individual who attends the re-visit.**